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ABSTRACT

The kit provides students and teachers new ways to study culture through its material evidence: the objects and artifacts of daily life. In the four activities comprising this kit, students study clothing as an aspect of their own material culture. They move from general observations about clothing to consideration of their personal wardrobes, then focus on school/community styles, and finally to the global aspects of outside influence on individual choices. Each activity contains a brief teacher's background section, a lesson plan, reproducible worksheets and handouts, along with other suggested writing or other assignments. The kit provides the following activities: (1) "Clothes Talk: Themes Found in Apparel"; (2) "Clothes Count: Personal Wardrobes"; (3) "Clothes Perception: Identifying Styles"; and (4) "Clothes Appeal: Commercial Arbiters of Style." Contains eight references. (EH)

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To the chagrin often of both parents and teachers, clothing and personal appearance are subjects that almost never fail to win the attention of young people. Is clothing in fact a driving force in late-twentieth-century Young America? Or is this a phenomenon limited to the major metropolitan areas that have absorbed the bulk of the consumption ethic? Do predominant clothing styles have regional flavors? Do public and private schools exert widely variant influences on their students' wardrobe choices? Are media influences the strongest determinants of what people wear today? These are some of the questions the Smithsonian Institution considered in developing this clothing research kit.

Image and Identity is the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education's second kit in a series of education outreach projects sponsored by Brother International Corporation, Somerset, New Jersey. One of the primary goals of these kits is to show students and their teachers new ways to study culture through its material evidence: the objects and artifacts of daily life. The kit methods are based on approaches used by historians and curators at the Smithsonian Institution and other museums around the world. Although they require abstract and analytical thought, these methods are active and "hands-on."

Our first project, prepared for the 1989-90 school year, *Carbons to Computers: The Changing American Office*, explored technology and cultural values by studying the common workplaces of most American lives. In *Image and Identity* we look for meanings in the American adolescent's relationship with clothing and fashion. Both kits were designed to be useful to teachers of various subjects in senior high school but may be adapted for older or younger students. *Image and Identity* is particularly relevant to English, sociology, home economics, history, and current events classes.

While *Image and Identity* has much to offer students and teachers, we at the Smithsonian also hope to gain from its use. Young people today are invaluable reporters and analysts of their own culture, and we want to hear from them. We expect to gain a body of firsthand reports on adolescents' clothing in contemporary America. In addition we hope the submissions lead to new clothing acquisitions for our collections—objects that will document life in our own time for us and for historians and museum visitors in the future. Instructions in the kit explain how to submit this information.

IMAGE AND IDENTITY IN BRIEF—

In four activities that comprise this kit students study clothing—an aspect of their own material culture. They will move from general observations about clothing to consideration of their own personal wardrobes, then to focus on school community styles, and finally to the global aspects of outside influences on individual choices.

Each activity contains a brief teacher's background section, a step-by-step lesson plan, reproducible worksheets and other handouts, and suggested writing or other assignments. Activity 3 contains instructions for submitting information to the Smithsonian. The kit's final section offers suggestions for further exploration and study of the topic.

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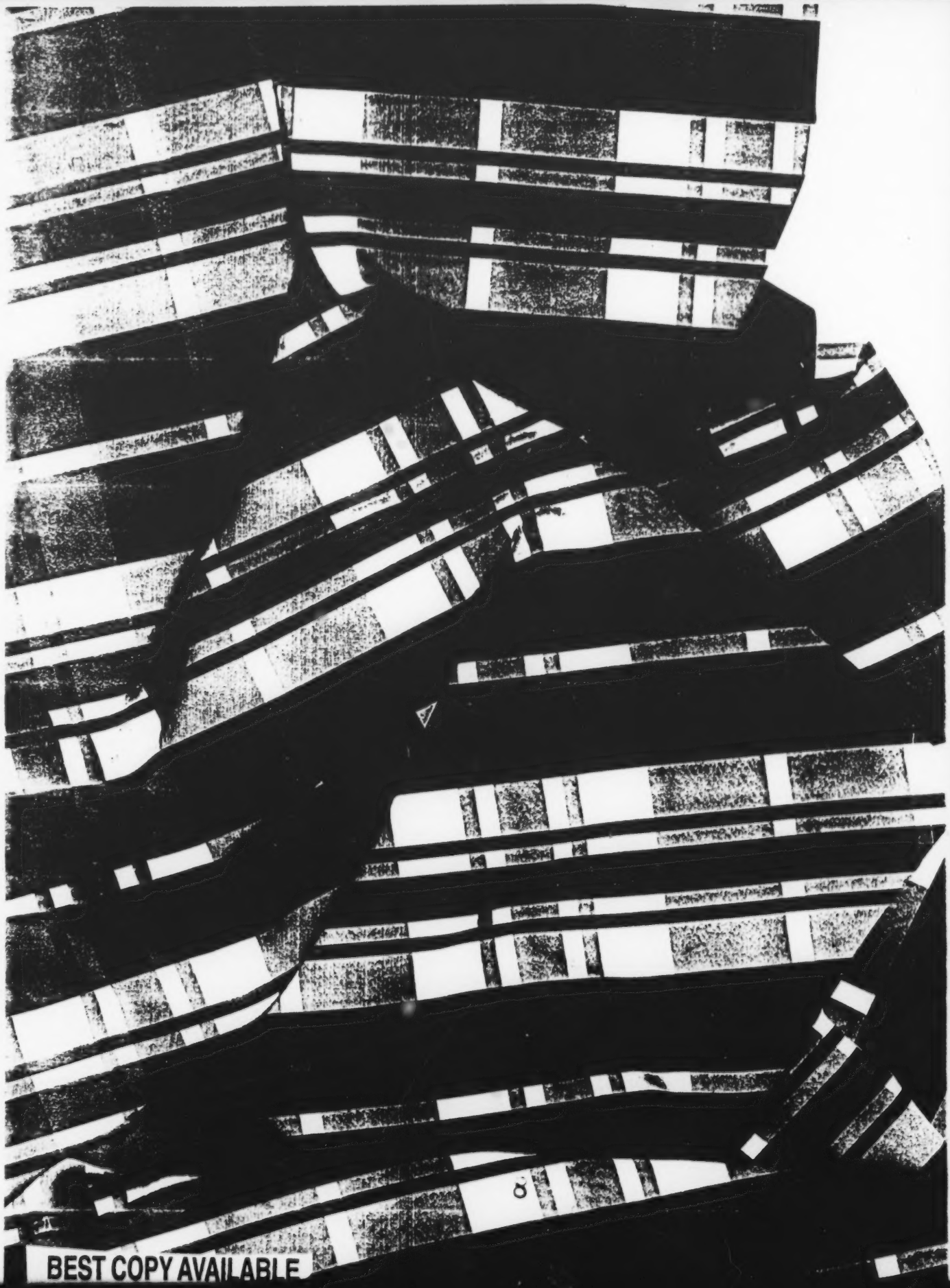

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Clothes Talk: *Themes Found in Apparel*

OBJECTIVE:

Begin thinking about the meanings and values ascribed to clothes.

FOCUS:

Determining "clothes awareness" by studying pictured clothes cues.

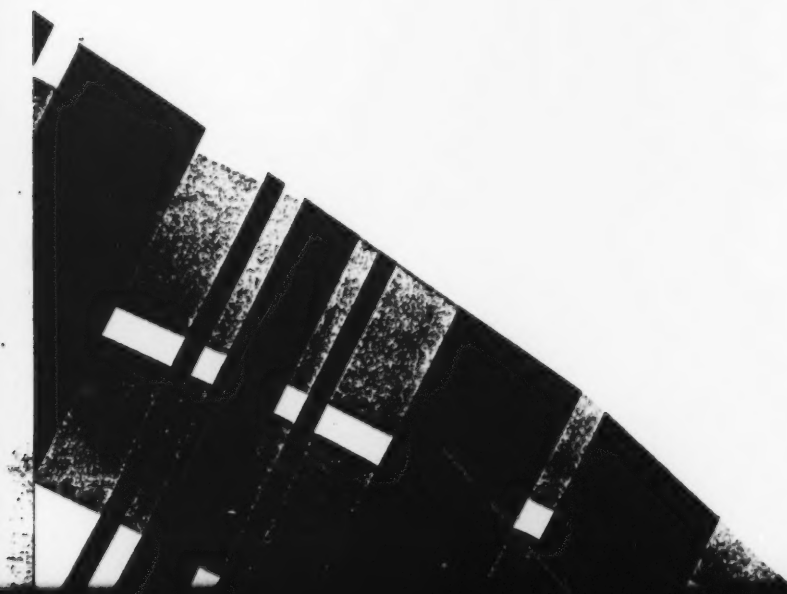
TEACHER'S BACKGROUND:

This activity is based on a classic research study of social and psychological meanings of clothing conducted by a home economist, Dr. Mary Lou Rosencranz, in the early 1960s.

In Dr. Rosencranz's test, seven drawings depicting incongruities between clothing and other aspects of the characters in the pictures were administered to a selected group. Interviewers asked participants to tell a story about each picture; these stories were tape-recorded for later review.

Analysis of the responses showed that clothing cues represented a significant number of the total responses. Several clothing themes occurred in the stories of more than half of the informants.

This study and others done in the same period established the importance of clothing cues in making judgments about a person. Contemporary beliefs that a person can "dress for success" and create a physical "image" descend from studies like this one.



MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Four drawings, scoring form

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Writing materials, blackboard or flip chart, duplicate copies of drawings

Step 1:

Tell the class that they are going to see a series of pictures and write a 5-minute story about each picture. DO NOT MENTION CLOTHING IN YOUR INTRODUCTORY REMARKS. Then, give each student a photocopy of page 8. Allow about 5 minutes for students to write a brief story about what is going on in each picture, for a total writing time of about 20 minutes.

Step 2:

When they have stopped writing, ask the students to jot down an answer to the following question for each picture/story they observed:

What part of the picture made you think of your story?

Step 3:

Tell the students that one purpose of the exercise was to see how important clothing cues were in their interpretation of a situation. Suggest that this might indicate something about the importance of clothing in their own lives. Another purpose was to probe the values they attach to clothing: values that will be examined in the other activities in this kit.

Have the students form small groups or work individually to analyze what they have written:

a. Use a highlighting pen to mark off the number of lines written about clothing, or underline or circle the lines.

b. Count the number of characters whose clothing is mentioned in the comments. *Maximum score, 12.*

c. Count the number of times students answered the question posed in step 2 (what part of the picture made you think of your story?) by mentioning some aspect of the way a depicted character was dressed. *Maximum score, 4.*

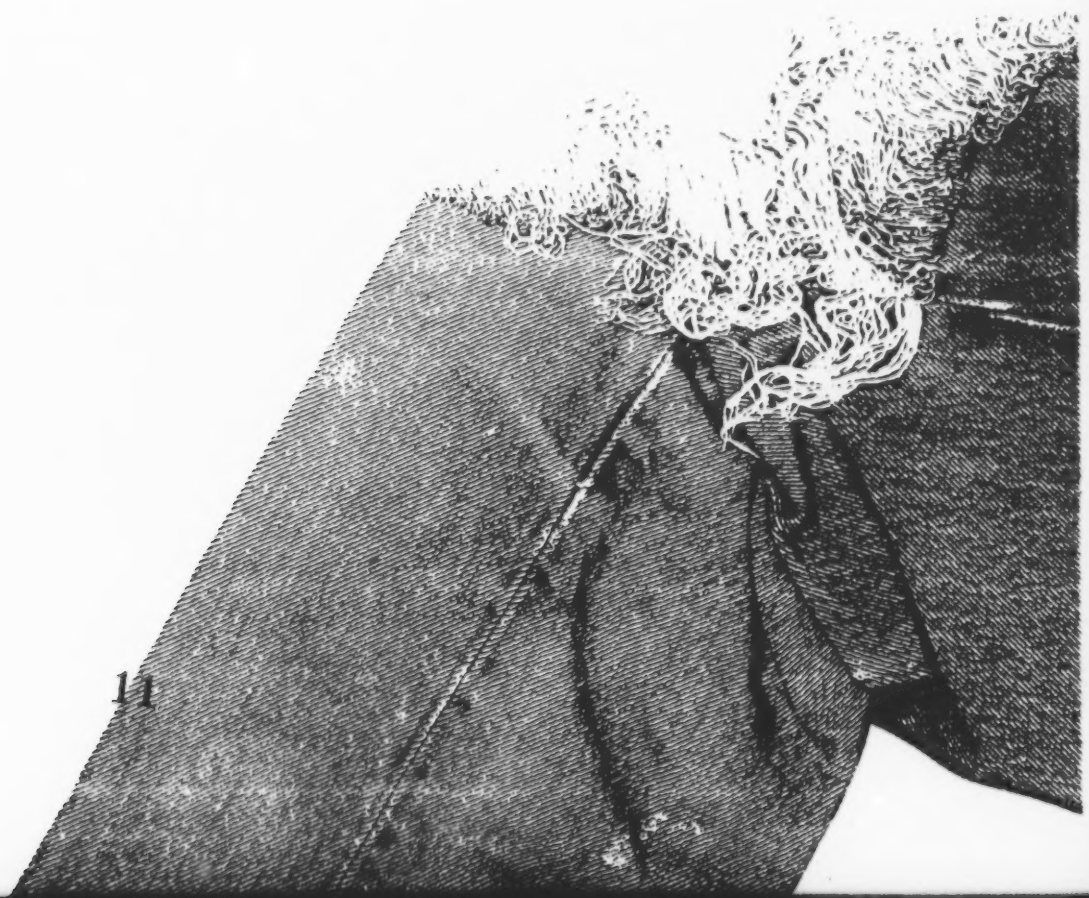
d. The pictures show people dressed incongruously for the social situations they seem to be in. Look at the comments about clothing and appearance in the stories and try to identify the themes expressed. Give each student a photocopy of Form 1 on page 9 or list on the blackboard the themes it identifies in Part 1. Then have each student make a personal "clothing themes" tally by checking the number of themes in their stories.

e. Now obtain a "clothing awareness" score for each student by adding up the responses to the items discussed in this step. Part 2 of Form 1 provides places to total the following:

- number of lines about clothing written
- number of characters whose clothing is mentioned
- number of stories based on clothing worn in the pictures
- number of clothing themes

Then, find out the range of clothing awareness scores in the class by asking students what their scores were. Using the blackboard, write the highest, lowest, and average scores, so each student can place his or her own score within the class.

- Talk about the range of scores in the class and ask if anyone was surprised by his or her score. Why?
- Look at the data in different ways. Compare girls' scores with boys' scores: who is more aware of clothing? See if more comments were written about female characters than about male characters (3b).
- The results of this quiz should indicate that clothing "talks"—and that many people will make similar interpretations of clothing cues. What factors might have something to do with people agreeing (or disagreeing) on the meaning of clothes? Would being older or younger, or from a different part of the country or part of the world, have an effect on how a person interpreted the four pictures?



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CLOTHING AWARENESS

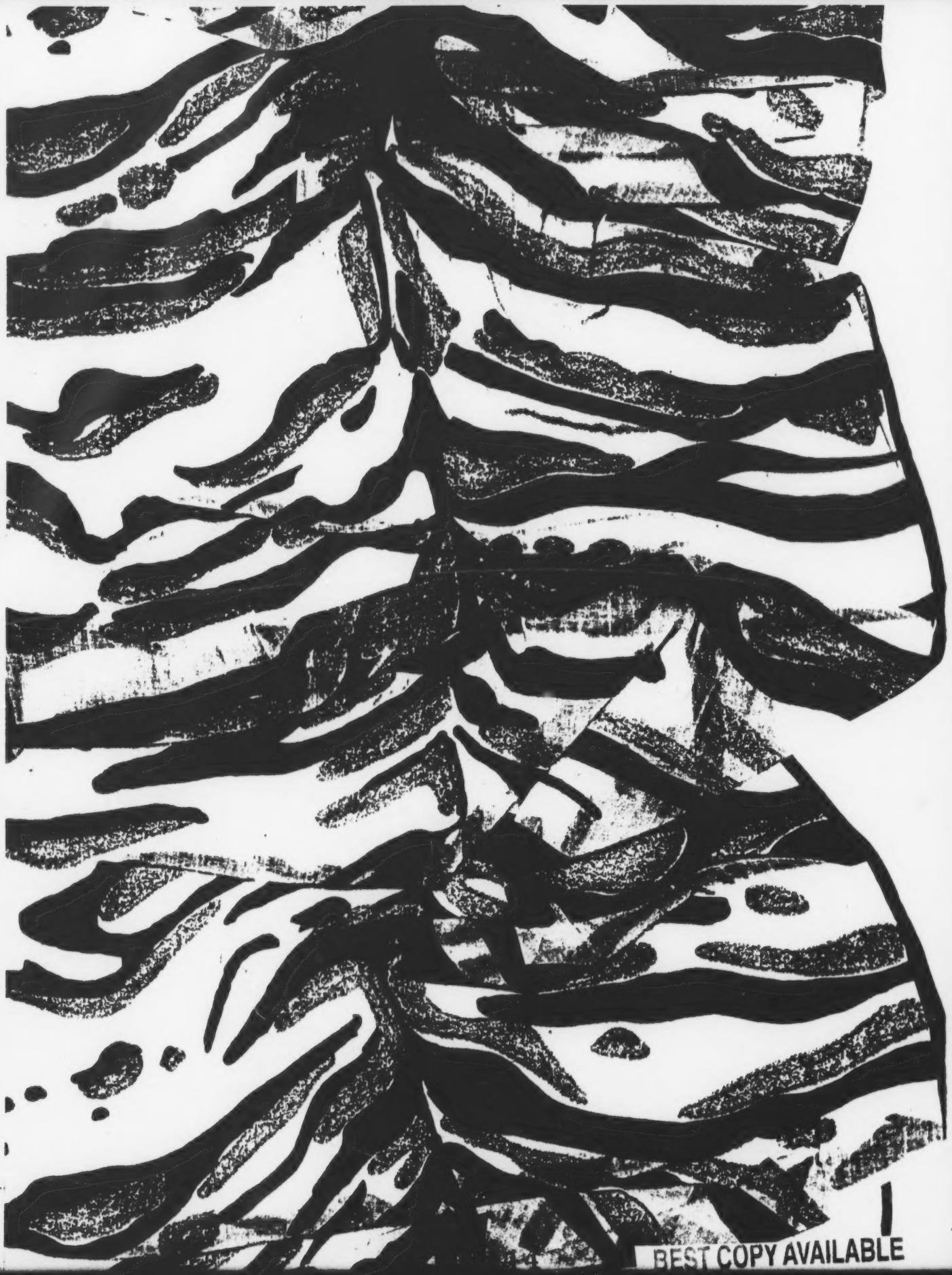
Part 1-Clothing Themes

	Picture 1	2	3	4
Formal vs. informal (e.g., "too dressed up")	___	___	___	___
Age (e.g., "too old/young for attire")	___	___	___	___
Body size (any comments)	___	___	___	___
Status (e.g., clothing indicates low or high class, wealth or poverty, power or its absence)	___	___	___	___
Sex (appropriateness of clothing to a man or woman)	___	___	___	___
Cultural (e.g., "dressed like someone from . . .")	___	___	___	___
Other (specify)	___	___	___	___
Theme totals	___	___	___	___

Part 2-Clothing Awareness score

- Number of lines about clothing written _____
- Number of characters whose clothing is mentioned _____
- Number of stories based on clothing worn in the pictures _____
- Number of clothing themes _____

Total Clothing Awareness score _____



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Clothes Count: *Personal Wardrobes*

OBJECTIVE:
Exploring some of the meanings and motivations of one's own clothing choices by analyzing and interpreting data.

FOCUS:
Listing, rating, and interpreting personal wardrobe choices.

TEACHER'S BACKGROUND:
Activity 1 illustrated that clothing provokes emotional responses and that many people have ideas about the appropriateness of what people wear. This activity looks at how collectively held notions of appropriate appearance—by boys and girls about themselves and each other, by parents about children, by groups of friends—influence personal clothing choices.

From the perspectives of fashion manufacturers and retailers, style, cut, color, price, and sales figures are of primary interest. To those who look for personal and social meanings in clothing, however, clothing as people wear it is the engaging subject. Clothing presents the physical self to the world. Young people attach great importance to clothing partly because it tends to say so much about who they are and how they see themselves. At a time in life when figuring out who you are and what kind of adult you want to be are of primary importance, clothing becomes a significant indicator of emerging identity.

Most adolescents dress to conform to some group, whether it is the dominant group in school; a small, fringe, or rebellious group; or a group they can't belong to (like famous musicians) but can identify with.

At the same time as group membership is of extreme importance to adolescents so is developing a sense of self and individuality. Breaking away from some parental controls while holding on to some of their values is a crucial task. Conflicting needs and interests may make these individuals' clothing choices confusing or difficult, for both themselves and observers.

This activity helps students gain new perspectives on clothing. But a word of caution. The "Personal Clothing Profile" in this activity, while informative, is not scientific. It introduces ideas, provides insights, and promotes discussion, but it does not create a definitive picture of personality or behavior.

Further, although studies have shown that Americans of all income levels often dress fashionably (or unfashionably!), some students' clothing choices may be dictated more by economic necessity or deprivation than by fashion dictates or group norms. Allow students' "scores" to remain private (as is suggested in the lesson plan) if the activity is likely to be sensitive.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Personal Clothing Inventory and Personal Clothing Profile forms

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Writing materials, duplicate copies of forms

Step 1:

Discuss the very personal nature of clothing choices, how one's self-image is both depicted in and derived from one's wardrobe selections. Tell students that one of the most valuable documents a historian can work with is a household or personal inventory, tied as it must be to the life and circumstances of its owner.

Say that making a personal clothing inventory by surveying one's own wardrobe is an appropriate first step toward understanding clothing in our own lives. Then ask students to complete their copies of the Personal Clothing Inventory form, possibly as an overnight assignment to allow them time for research and decision making.

Step 2:

Discuss the several aspects of concern reflected in clothing likes and dislikes, e.g., parental opinions, self-expression, peer approval. Then ask students to transfer their personal inventory answers to the Personal Clothing Profile (Form 3).

Step 3:

Discuss with students the five categories (A through E) presented on the Clothing Profile and explained in "Some ways to think about . . ." on the form.

Step 4:

After the students have completed their Personal Clothing Profiles, initiate a discussion.

- Does your profile accurately describe you? If not, what do you think are the reasons? Besides the influences of parents and group norms, what else influences how a person dresses?
- Could a person be a clothing conformist but a strong individual in other areas of his or her life?
- What are some of the advantages of dressing well? of dressing indifferently? What are some of the disadvantages of dressing well? of dressing indifferently?

Optional activities:

- Write an essay about what influences your clothing choices, based on your profile. Illustrate with snapshots or drawings.
- Add up individual Personal Clothing Profile totals to make a Class Clothing Profile. Write a news or feature story about the findings.

PERSONAL CLOTHING INVENTORY

List 10 of your favorite items of clothing:

F1 _____

F2 _____

F3 _____

F4 _____

F5 _____

F6 _____

F7 _____

F8 _____

F9 _____

F10 _____

List 10 of your least favorite items of clothing:

L1 _____

L2 _____

L3 _____

L4 _____

L5 _____

L6 _____

L7. _____

L8 _____

L9 _____

L10 _____

Answer the following questions about these items. Write the item numbers (e.g., F3, L2) on the line following the question.

1. Which items did you get because a friend of the same sex liked them?

_____

2. Which items did you get because a friend of the opposite sex liked them?

_____

3. Which items did you get because your parent(s) liked them?

_____

4. Which items did you get because your parent(s) did not like them?

_____

5. Which items did you get because a group of friends, clique, club, or gang had them?

_____

6. Which items are similar to items worn by members of the opposite sex?

_____

7. Which items are very different from those worn by members of the opposite sex?

_____

8. Which items are unlike anything owned or worn by anyone else you know?

_____

9. Which items did you get because they were the "right" brand or label? This means, for example, L.A. Gear shoes rather than Reeboks, or vice versa.

_____

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PERSONAL CLOTHING PROFILE

Directions: Take the responses from the Personal Clothing Inventory and fill in the blanks below. Read carefully so that you enter favorites (F) and least favorites (L) in the correct spaces.

	Conforming	Nonconforming	
q.3	F _____	L _____	**A. Parental approval/ disapproval**
q.4	L _____	F _____	
q.1	F _____	L _____	**B. Group identity**
q.5	F _____	L _____	
q.9	F _____	L _____	
q.6	F _____	L _____	**C. Gender identity**
q.7	L _____	F _____	
q.2	F _____	L _____	**D. Sexual attraction**
q.8	L _____	F _____	**E. Individuality**

Students' Guide to the Personal Clothing Profile

1. Looking at the five categories, where do most (more than half) of your answers cluster, in the "conformity" column, on the left, or the "nonconformity" column on the right? For the purposes of this exercise, determine whether you are a clothing conformist, nonconformist, or a mixture.

2. Then compare the five categories (A through E) to see which seem to be the strongest and weakest influences on your clothing choices. Again look at where most of your answers cluster. If, for example, most of your answers are in the "nonconformity" column for A and the "conformity" column for B, you may be trying to move away from parents' influence toward dressing like your friends.

(Continued on back)

Some ways to think about each of the categories:

GROUP A looks at your parents' influence on your clothing choices. How old you are, whether you earn your own clothes money, and other factors may influence how many items you placed here.

GROUP B has more questions than the other categories because group memberships are extremely important to preteens and teenagers. By being part of a group that is interested in academics, athletics, or behaving in different ways, young people try out ways of living and thinking that help determine and define the kind of adults they will be.

GROUP C, "gender identity," looks at whether you dress to strongly differentiate yourself from the opposite sex or in a more "unisex" way. Clothing is not by definition masculine or feminine—people make these decisions and change them all the time.

GROUP D looks at the age-old question of whether people dress to please themselves or to attract members of the opposite sex.

GROUP E looks at individuality, which may be explained by many different things. If you have close ties to a cultural group, are an immigrant or visitor from another country, make your own clothes, plan to have a career in the fashion industry, are artistic—or many other reasons—you might have your favorites in the nonconforming column.

Finally, remember that this test is for fun—don't take your totals too seriously! You may see some patterns in your answers, but this quiz can't tell everything about you and why you dress the way you do.

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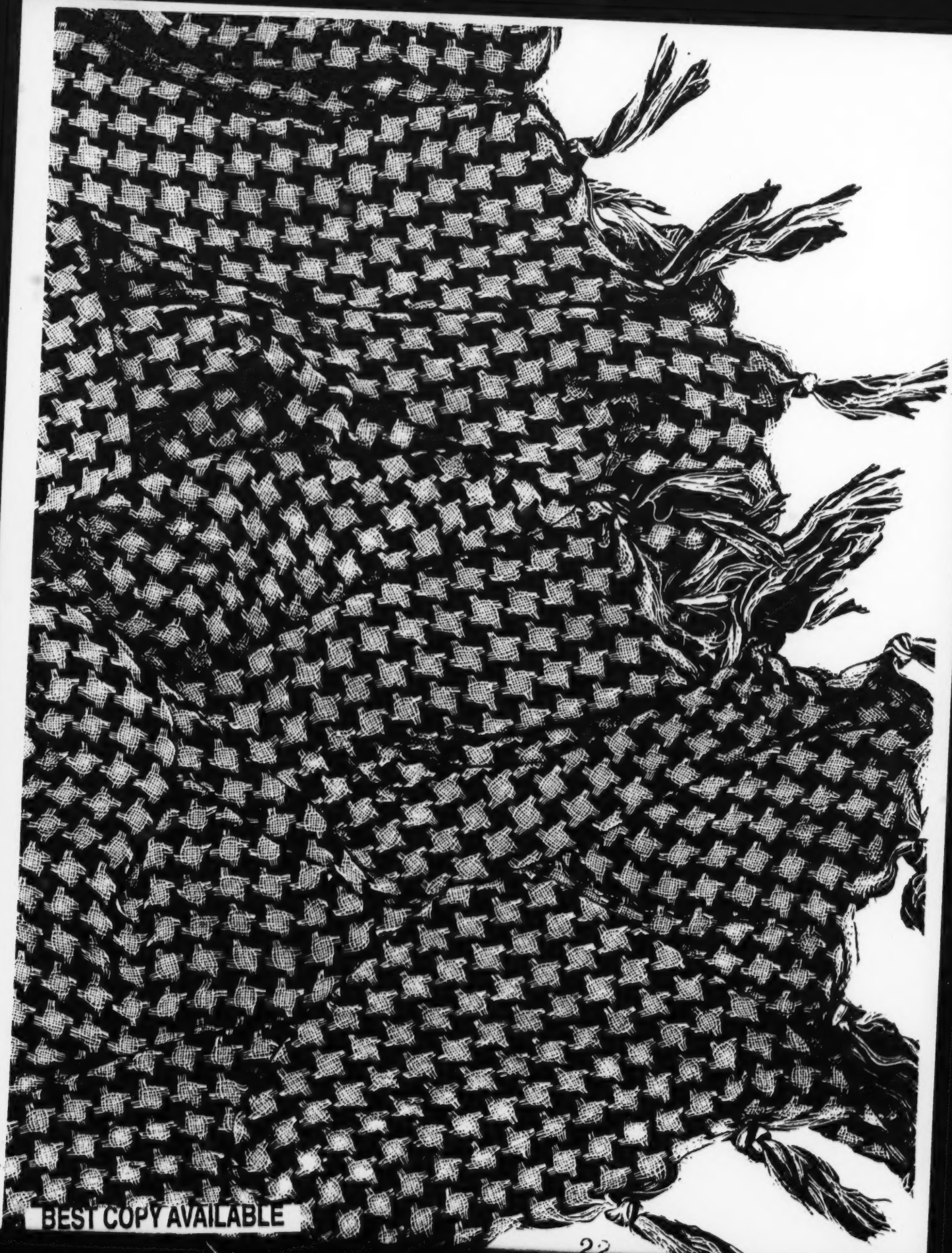

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Clothes Perception: *Identifying Styles*

OBJECTIVE:

Considering two key questions about clothing and style in the students' lives:

- What styles are worn in the school or by young people their age in the community?
- What do these styles mean?

FOCUS:

Observing, naming, and interpreting individual styles.

OPTIONAL SECTIONS:

Contributing to Smithsonian Institution research.

TEACHER'S BACKGROUND:

Solving the puzzles of what clothing, style, and style changes mean is the work of costume and clothing historians, social psychologists, and cultural commentators, as well as some of the thousands of people who work in the clothing and fashion industry. This activity involves students in trying to answer the same questions.

In the preceding activities students have recognized clothing's power to communicate messages and considered some of the reasons for their own clothing choices. These insights will inform their efforts in this activity to define and understand the styles they and other young people wear today.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Three "correct style" illustrations; Clothing Style Identification form; optional forms

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Writing materials, overhead projector or duplicate copies of illustrations, copies of forms

Step 1:

Conduct a class discussion about styles in your school. Say that there is frequently more than one style of dressing in a school. (If students wear uniforms, talk about whether different styles can still be distinguished.)

Point out that people have been concerned about the correctness of their clothing and whether they are wearing the right styles, or styles in the right ways, for many years. To illustrate this point, look at the pictures on pages 23 and 24.

- "The Right Stuff" appeared in the *Washington Post* in July 1989. How do the styles depicted compare with what students themselves wear?
- Look at the images that show "correct style" for college-bound boys in the 1950s, girls in the 1920s. How do these styles compare with what students themselves wear?
- How accurate are these "style guides" likely to be? Why or why not?
- What are some of the reasons many people care about wearing the "right stuff"?

Step 2:

Ask the class to imagine that they work in a museum 100 years in the future. Their job is to show how children and teenagers dressed in the last decade of the twentieth century. Some questions might help to structure the discussion.

- What sources of information would you look at?
- What would having 500 random samples of clothing made during the time period tell you?
- Would looking at popular films, television programs, and advertising help? How about paintings and statues?
- What do you think would give the best information about what teenagers wore?

The Smithsonian Institution thinks that the best information comes directly from the people who wear the clothes—in this case, today's young people. The next steps of this activity provide suggestions for structuring research into adolescents' styles today.

Three "correct style" illustrations; Clothing Style Identification Checklist form; optional forms

Step 3:

Working as a class or in groups, try to decide whether there are distinctly different styles worn by young people in your school (or community). Assuming these groups exist, assign a name to each style or, better, identify what everyone calls each style (e.g., "preppy," "punk").

Still working in groups, have the students use a Clothing Style Identification Checklist to record and structure their observations of each style they have identified. The checklist has two optional parts for submitting information to the Smithsonian.

Step 4 (Optional):

Have the class use the photographs they have taken and the information they have gathered on Form 4 to put together an exhibit about school styles. Or, as in Activity 2, use the information to write news or feature stories about school styles.

Some Questions and Answers about the Smithsonian, curators, acquisitions . . .

Why does the Smithsonian want clothing and what does it want to know about it?

The Division of Costume of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, is continually trying to improve the museum's collection of garments and accessories worn by civilian Americans from the 17th century to the present time. The goal is to acquire a range of clothing that shows what people of all socioeconomic levels, national origins, races, and religions wore in the past or are wearing today.

What does the Smithsonian want to know about an item of clothing?

In a sense, the Smithsonian wants to know everything about garments it accepts as historic artifacts. Curators ask questions about clothes that reflect their best guesses about what kinds of questions people are going to ask in the future. Some often-asked questions: Who made the garment and where? How much did it cost? When was it purchased or made? Was the garment ever altered?—how? Where was the item worn (geographic area)? What about the person who wore the clothes—man, woman, or child; race, religion, and ethnic background, height and weight, dates of birth, marriage, death?

Who are curators and what do they do?

Curators are the people who take care of museum collections. They study and often acquire new objects; they interpret and try to explain the meanings and significance of objects.

Curators prepare exhibitions, often over a period of several years of studying, collecting, collaborating, and planning with scholars, technical experts, and designers. Curators conduct original research that relates to their collections. *Image and Identity* is an example of such a research project.

In another approach, the case study, the Division of Costume is studying individuals and their clothing in depth. In addition to facts and figures, curators want to know of specific individual circumstances that may have influenced individual clothing choices such as membership in a social group, occupation, or a condition of disability.

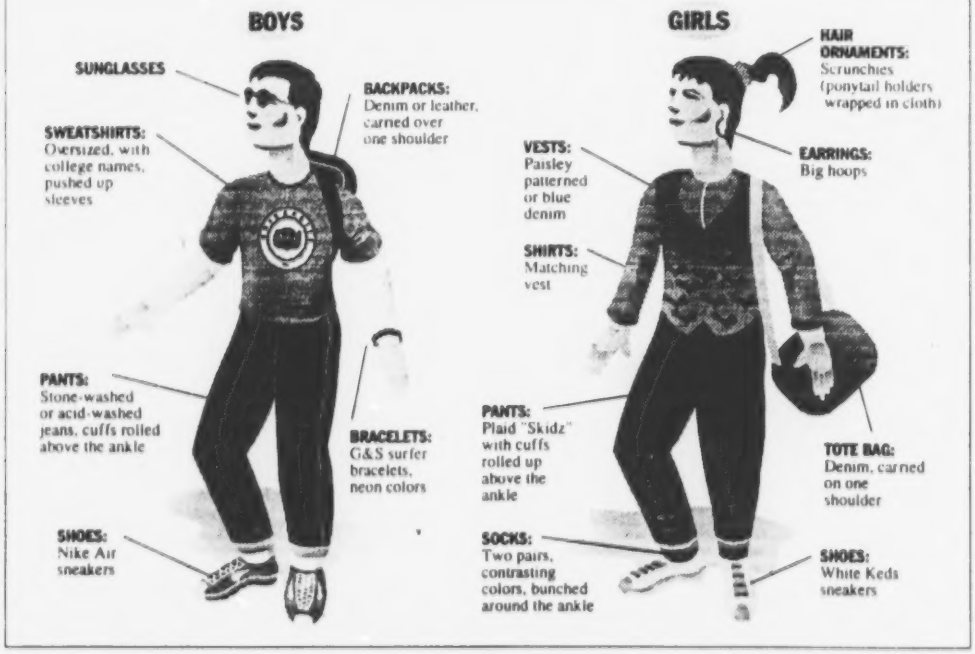
Does the Smithsonian put donors' clothing on display in the museum?

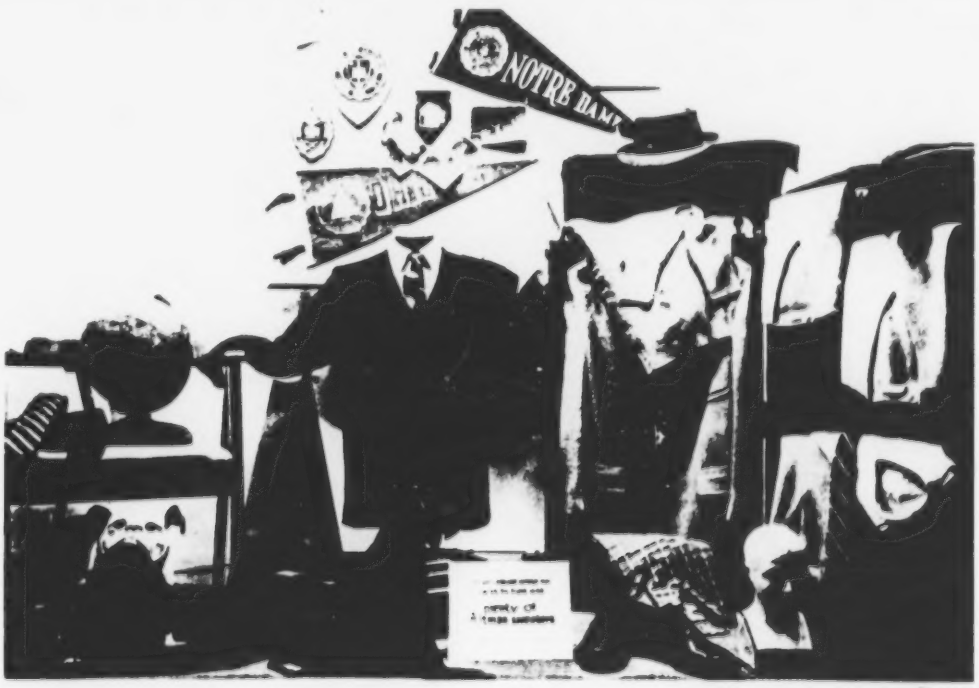
When the museum "accessions" an object it enters the study collections where it is used to fulfill the broad educational and scholarly goals of the Smithsonian Institution. These goals include research and exhibition for present and future generations. NO item is accepted with the stipulation that it must be exhibited. Donors also can't use acceptance of clothing by the Smithsonian as an endorsement or for advertising purposes.

Does the Smithsonian pay for these acquisitions?

No, but gifts are tax deductible and a signed copy of a Deed of Gift will be sent to the donor in a formal letter of acknowledgment.

THE RIGHT STUFF


BOYS
SUNGLASSES
BACKPACKS: Denim or leather, carried over one shoulder
SWEATSHIRTS: Oversized, with college names, pushed up sleeves
PANTS: Stone-washed or acid-washed jeans, cuffs rolled above the ankle
BRACELETS: G&S surfer bracelets, neon colors
SHOES: Nike Air sneakers
GIRLS
HAIR ORNAMENTS: Scrunchies (ponytail holders wrapped in cloth)
EARRINGS: Big hoops
VESTS: Paisley patterned or blue denim
SHIRTS: Matching vest
PANTS: Plaid "Skidz" with cuffs rolled up above the ankle
TOTE BAG: Denim, carried on one shoulder
SOCKS: Two pairs, contrasting colors, bunched around the ankle
SHOES: White Keds sneakers



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Woman's World Service Page for Mothers

Whose Daughters Go Away to College

Peerless Pattern 1068

No. 9-21-70 Camisole, made up and stamped on fine nainsook. Sizes 16 and 18 years. Price 85c. Perforated pattern, 35c.

Wardrobe Suggestions

From a Model Wardrobe List

The requirements vary in different states, and it is always wise to write to the registrar of your college for details of the list.

[illegible] Apron dress
[illegible] Middy suits
[illegible] [illegible] suit of wool
Rain coat, rubbers, hat
[illegible] Lingerie waist dress, of white silk or wool
Two [illegible] Evening gown, silk or net
One [illegible] suit, [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
Shoes [illegible]

Manicure set, [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

CLOTHING STYLE IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

PLEASE NOTE: Use separate checklists to profile each style you have identified within your student body or local community. Use extra paper if you need more space, but mark the pages "4B continued," for example, if you submit them to the Smithsonian.

Date _____

Name of style _____

Do people who wear the style call it this name? _____

Do people who do not wear the style call it this name or did you make up the name?

_____

_____

Please estimate the percentage of persons in the school who wear this style. _____

List the other styles you have identified and estimate the percentage of individuals who wear those styles. _____

_____

_____

_____

Would a person from a particular race, religious group, or ethnic background wear this style more often than a person from a different background? If so, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is this style worn by boys, girls, or both? _____

If both boys and girls wear the style and you are going to submit information to the Smithsonian, please make up one checklist for a boy and another for a girl.

How old are most of the wearers? _____

(Continued on back)

Describe the elements that make up the style for either a boy or a girl. What do you have to be wearing to look like this? Note color or colors, if they are important. Note how items of clothing are worn, for example, tight or big and loose, cuffed up, short or long, inside out. Here's a possible way to make your observation, in top to bottom order. Use more paper if necessary.

Head (e.g., hairstyle, hat, make-up, facial hair) _____

_____

_____

Main dress (e.g., pants, skirt, dress) _____

_____

_____

Outerwear (e.g., coat, jacket) _____

_____

_____

Accessories worn (e.g., jewelry, scarf, belt, keys) _____

_____

_____

Accessories carried (e.g., bag, cane) _____

_____

_____

Describe this style by writing a paragraph about it _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Very important:

Attach a photograph or drawing of the style if you submit this checklist to the Smithsonian.

OPTIONAL SECTION I

If you send in Clothing Style Identification checklists to the Smithsonian, we would also be interested in responses to the following questions. These questions are to be answered by individuals, rather than by the group (have only one person answer these questions, or make copies for each member of the group). Use extra paper if you need more space.

How do you feel about the style described on Form 4? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you dress this way yourself? _____

If your answer to the previous question is no, how do you think that affects how you feel about the style? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Note: *Also fill out Form 5, the Clothing Research Project submission form.*

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OPTIONAL SECTION II

Can you think of someone who is a great example of this style? We'd like you to take some pictures of him or her and use the questions included here to gather additional information. You might first like to try out interviewing each other—then you can change questions that don't make sense, or add more of your own. You don't have to get an answer to all of the questions to submit the information you have obtained to the Smithsonian. Use extra paper if you need more space.

How would you describe the way you dress? _____

_____

Do you have a name for your style? _____

What is the biggest influence on your style? _____

Why do you dress this way? _____

Where do you see or read about clothes and fashion? _____

Do you dress like some star or famous person? _____

Try to complete the following phrases:

"If someone wanted to dress the way I do they'd have to wear _____

_____ "

"I usually shop at _____ "

"The next thing (to wear) that I want to buy is _____ "

"One thing that's changed about my look in the past 6 months is _____

_____ "

If you'd like, give us some insights about yourself:

Your favorite solitary activity? _____

Your preferred pursuits with friends? _____

Is this person willing to be contacted by the Smithsonian? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, fill in the following:

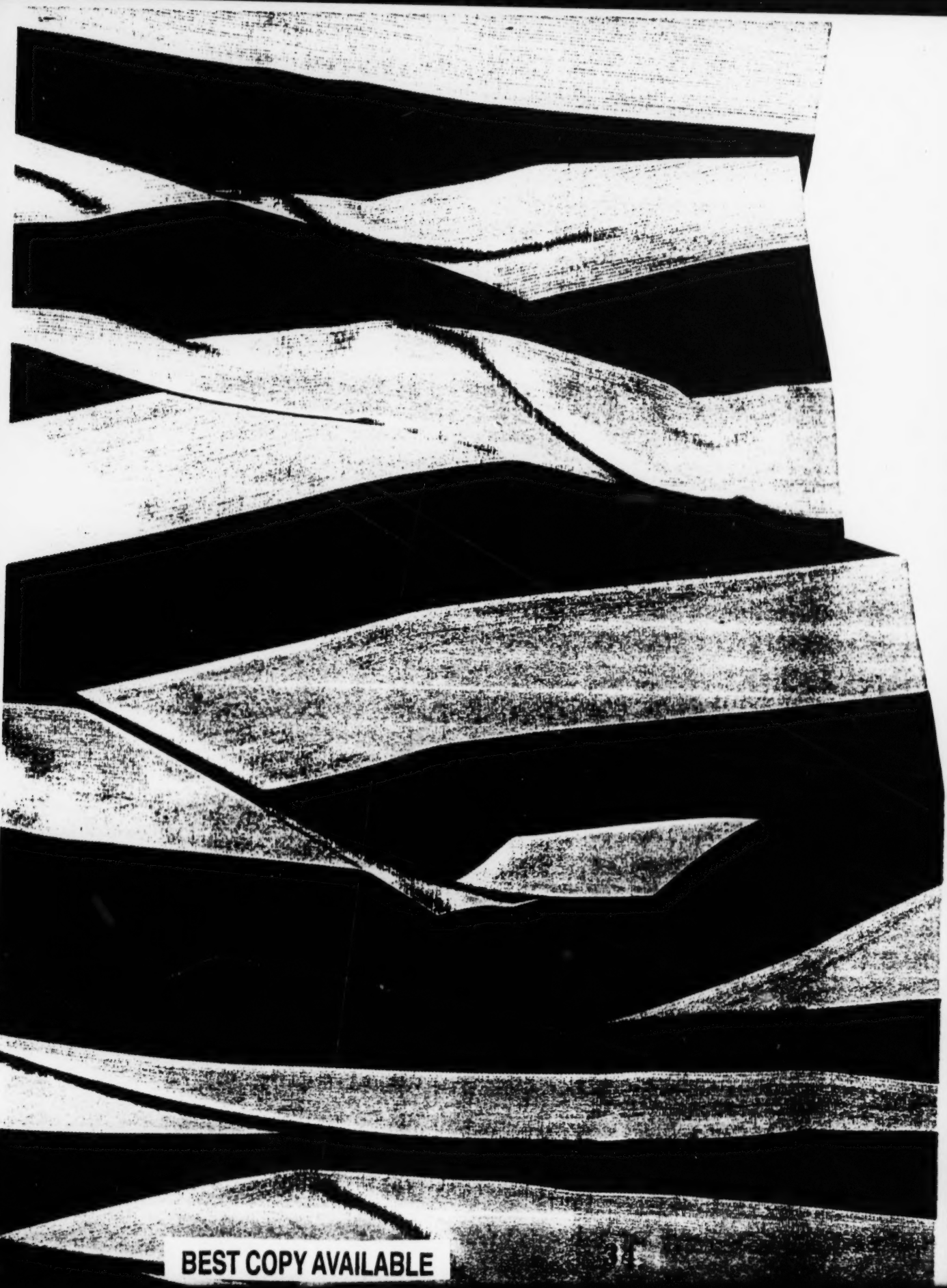
_____
NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED AND PHOTOGRAPHED

_____
STREET ADDRESS

_____
CITY STATE ZIP CODE

_____
DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER EVENING TELEPHONE NUMBER

Note: *Also fill out Form 5, the Clothing Research Project submission form.*
Very important: *Include photograph of person wearing the style.*



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Clothes Appeal: *Commercial Arbiters of Style*

OBJECTIVE:

Learning to analyze media images, primarily those conveyed in advertising, as they may influence clothing choices; increasing awareness and understanding of media influences.

FOCUS:

Collecting and discussing commercial images of clothing.

TEACHER'S BACKGROUND:

If you have progressed through the activities in this kit, your students have been thinking about how they dress, in particular, how other people may affect the way they dress. This activity explores influences from the larger society, mostly mass media, that also affect clothing choice.

Mass media images, especially those on television and in magazines and newspapers, use words and pictures to influence, persuade, even manipulate us to purchase new styles and items of clothing. This activity helps students see, analyze, and understand the messages behind those words and pictures.

A goal of *Image and Identity* is to promote objectivity and self-awareness about clothing so that students may make informed choices rather than be passive consumers of fashion. Having a better understanding of the influence of advertising encourages self-expression rather than imitation in wardrobe selection.

MATERIALS PROVIDED:

Two advertisements from the Smithsonian archives

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

Additional material culled by students from mass media

Step 1:

In class ask for definitions and explanations of advertising. Why do companies and organizations advertise? Who creates ads? Consider the following points:

- Advertising creates desire for a product.
- Advertising plays on genuine human needs (food, shelter, security, love, sex), but those needs may or may not be satisfied by the product or item advertised.
- Advertising is "targeted." Advertisers figure out whom they are trying to reach and what various groups exist within that audience (market segments). Advertisers determine what appeal the product has to these audience groups and then plan to reach them.

Step 2:

As homework, ask students to bring in to class copies of ads or images that may have an effect on the clothes they buy and wear. These may include magazine advertisements or illustrations; videotaped segments of television programs (including music videos) and films on videotape, if you have access to a VCR machine.

Then, start the class discussion of the two ads on pages 34 and 35 using the questions included here. If students have trouble understanding the appeals being made, explain that the ads were written for their grandparents or great-grandparents when they were young. What seems comfortably familiar in the ads? What seems strange because of the passage of time?

Analyzing Advertising:

1. What is the promise or appeal being made? Examples:
   - wealth
   - beauty
   - success with the opposite sex
   - fun and happiness
   - affiliation with famous person
   - popularity
   - social acceptance
   - status
   - sexual attractiveness
   - avoidance of rejection or embarrassment
2. What part of the ad is making the appeal?
   - words
   - music
   - drama or story told
   - pictures
   - sound
3. Who or what groups are the target of the ad?
   - age groups
   - males or females
   - occupational groups
   - regional groups

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Blue Moon

1. beauty, sophistication, sexual allure
2. pictures of sexy, sophisticated women with whom one can identify
3. women, probably younger women who fantasize about being carefree, wealthy, and sexy

The Britisher

1. equates masculinity, power, physical activity, intelligence with clothing—no details of fabric, price, style
2. words, with picture supporting
3. men who aspire to power and social sophistication

Step 3:

Now move on to the examples students have brought to class. Start by answering the same three questions about appeal, medium used, and target, then go on to general discussion. More possibilities for discussion:

- You will probably see more pictures than words. Does that in itself mean anything?
- Are pictures in black and white or color, sharp, or blurred, showing motion?
- Do the models look perfect, or like real people? How old are they?

SUMMING UP . . .

Do dominant themes emerge in clothing ads aimed at young people? What are these themes? Why do you think they sell clothes?

Is it possible to be completely individualistic in clothing choices? With so much influence from others, can a boy or girl have a personal style?

A NEW CREATION by BLUE MOON ▲▲▲

Think of it . . . exquisite stockings of finely woven chiffon, pure thread silk from top to toe, with a dainty Picot edge, at $1.65! For your smart Fall wardrobe, Blue Moon recommends Style 900, in all the newest shades dictated by Paris . . . Woven into this new creation are hidden reinforcements at toe, sole, heel and top for long life at points of greatest wear. Wears as it. Blue Moon Silk Stockings hold their smart shapeliness without strain on the delicate threads, and enhance the beauty of any carefully planned ensemble . . . Other Blue Moon styles, in chiffons and service weights, may be had from $1.35 to $2.50.

NATIONAL SILK STOCKING ASSOCIATION, INC.

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3

We develop personalities!

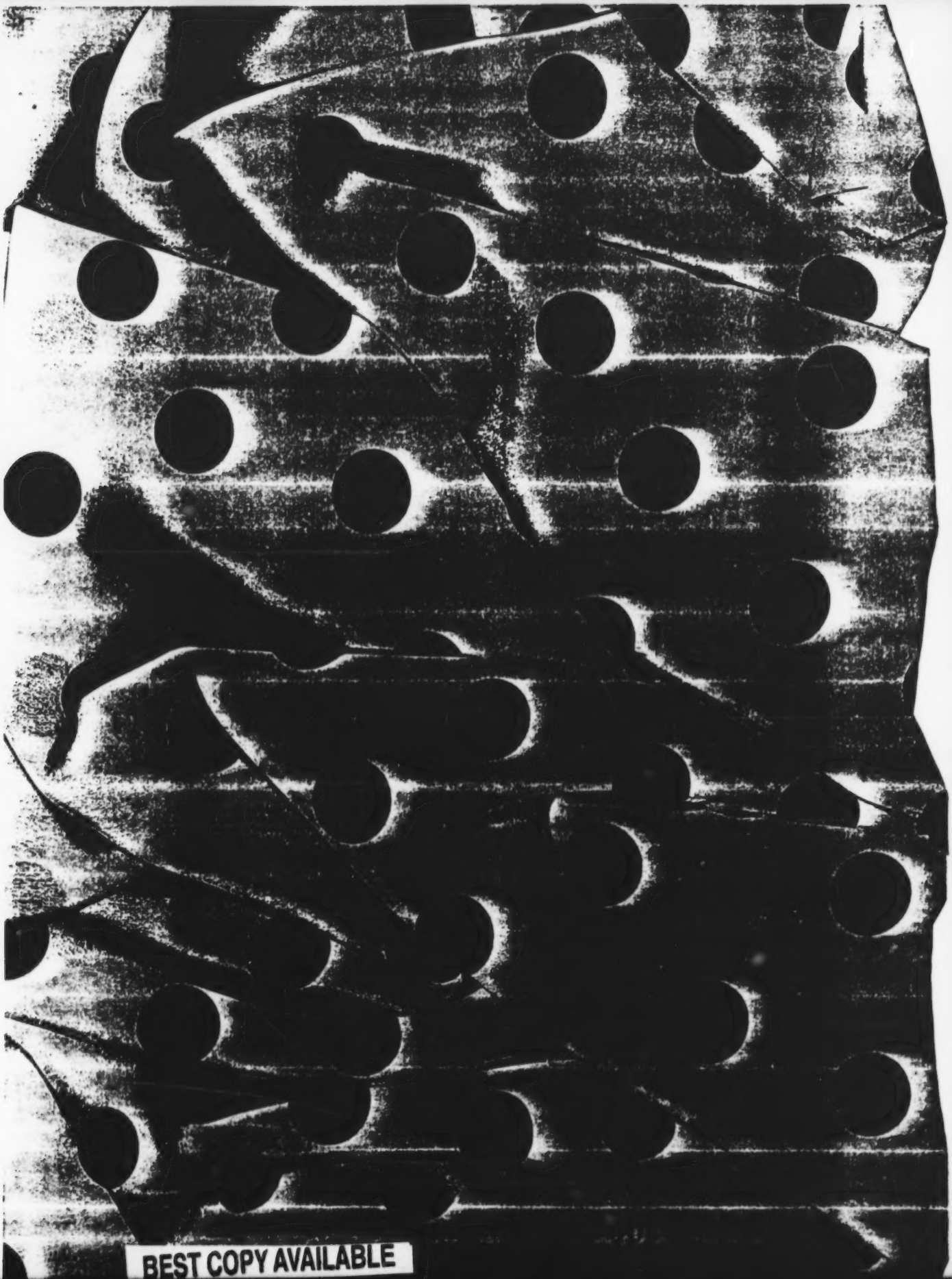
The Britisher

Power and vigor mark The Britisher, our most recent interpretation of the double breasted suit. Every element of proportion expresses a weighted personality. Every detail of line gives facility to the enthusiastic physical activity that is born in an agile mind. To see The Britisher is to know how well we have developed clothing designing as an expression of the best characteristics of effective personalities.

LEBOW BROTHERS

Baltimore and Hanover Sts., Baltimore
200 Fifth Avenue, New York

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY



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If you want to continue your study of clothing, find out if there are any clothing collections held by the museums in your area. If so, try to arrange a tour or visit and a meeting with a person knowlegeable about the collection. Ask questions about who wore the clothing, for what occasions, and what the clothing may have meant in the wearer's life.

When you are in Washington, D.C., you can see numerous examples and images of clothing, fashion, and personal adornment in the Smithsonian's many museums. In addition to the major collections within the National Museum of American History, other sources of information on the legacy of clothing throughout the ages include the following:

- Uniforms, military, aviation, aerospace: National Museum of American History, National Air and Space Museum
- Jewelry and other objects of personal adornment: National Museum of African Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (Asian art), National Museum of American History
- Clothing, body shape and size: in paintings and sculpture at the National Museum of American Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, National Portrait Gallery
- Early man—clothing, objects of personal adornment: National Museum of Natural History
- Design: Cooper Hewitt Museum, New York City

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CLOTHING RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

Directions: You may submit form 4, form 4a, form 4b, or all of them, but be sure to fill out and attach this form with your submission.

Today's date _____

Name of school _____

School mailing address _____

_____

_____

Is the school in: ❑ inner city? ❑ suburbs?

❑ small town? ❑ rural area?

Teacher's name _____

Teacher's telephone _____

Class *(subject taught and the approximate age of students)* _____

Mail to:
Clothing Research Project
Smithsonian Institution
Division of Costume, 4202 NMAH
Washington, D.C. 20560

Do not send clothing.

Photographs become the property of the Smithsonian Institution and cannot be returned.

DAVID GRAHAM

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Image & Identity: *Clothing and Adolescence in the 1990s*

Please take few minutes to complete this form. This page is a postage-paid self-mailer. Fold as marked, staple or tape the form together, and mail. Thank you!

A. About you . . .

1. Profession/occupation: _____
   Last degree you have/year of graduation: _____
2. Employer:
   ❑ Educational institution ❑ State or local government ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
3. Gender: ❑ Female ❑ Male

• Fold •

4. Residence:
   ❑ Washington, D.C., metropolitan area ❑ Other state ❑ Other country

• Fold •

B. About the kit . . .

1. How did you first hear about this kit? *(Mark only one response.)*
   ❑ Received information in mail ❑ Newspaper ❑ Radio or television
   ❑ Professional journal/newsletter ❑ Friend or colleague ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
2. What was the main reason you requested these materials? *(Mark only one response.)*
   ❑ Theme/topics ❑ Opportunity to use a different educational resource
   ❑ Interest in museum work/studies ❑ Material was free of charge
   ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
3. How did you use the kit?
   ❑ In class ❑ As extra-credit assignment or individual study project
   ❑ As library or media center resource ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
4. If you did use the kit in class, how many classroom hours did you spend on it? *(Mark only one response.)*
   ❑ 1-2 hours ❑ 2-4 hours ❑ 4-6 hours ❑ 6-8 hours ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
5. Class in which the kit was used:
   ❑ Social studies ❑ Home economics ❑ English ❑ Art ❑ Other *(specify)*: _____
6. Please rate the usefulness to you of handouts and contents of the kit package. *(Mark one response for each.)*

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Marginally useful	Not useful
a. Lessons				
b. Worksheets				
c. Assignments				
d. Photos/Drawings				

7. Please rate each of the following aspects of the kit. *(Mark one response for each.)*

	Superior	Above average	Average	Below average	Poor
a. General information about clothing					
b. Relation between objectives and contents					
c. Value to students					
d. Stimulation of interest in topic					
e. Development of writing skills					
f. Development of critical thinking skills					

Cut along here

(Continued on back)

c. Please give us your comments on this kit and suggestions for future topics.

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